

Augusta Regional Transportation Study Newsletter

Issue 24

June 2005

Transportation Commissioner visits Columbia County

Columbia County hosted a visit from GDOT Commissioner Harold E. Linnenkohl on June 6 at the Belair Conference Center in Evans, Georgia. Mr. Linnenkohl addressed approximately 100 attendees, including our Legislative Delegation, County Commissioners, and three different Councils that the County Chairman has organized to advise him on issues important to Columbia County.

The Commissioner discussed design and safety features on GDOT road projects, and then took questions from the room. Mr. Linnenkohl shared his goal to reduce road fatalities in Georgia and emphasized that safety was his number one concern. He addressed the need for raised concrete medians and agreed to look into several concerns from the audience. Attendees thought the meeting was extremely informative and the Commissioner was asked to return as often as possible to Columbia County.

Traffic Control Center Tour

For the 9th consecutive year, a temporary traffic control center operated during the Masters® Golf Tournament. Control center technicians used fixed and slow-scan cameras to monitor the flow of traffic on major roads and to adjust traffic signal timing to alleviate bottlenecks. Changeable message signs and radio broadcasts were used to relay traffic information to the public. HERO units were on hand to patrol Augusta-area freeways and provide assistance as needed.

The Augusta Engineering Department coordinated the operation of the TCC and hosted a public tour of the facility at Westside High School on Tuesday, April 5th. ARTS staff, TCC and CAC members, and local media representatives participated in the tour. Traffic engineers explained system operations, the equipment used, and plans for establishing a permanent TCC in Augusta.

Thanks to all the participating entities including the City of Augusta, GDOT, GEMA, the Georgia Highway Patrol, the Augusta National Golf Club and the Richmond County Sheriff's Department. Thanks also to Augusta Public Transit for providing transportation for tour participants. We look forward to next year's tour!

IN THIS ISSUE

Page Contents

- 1 Transportation Commissioner visits Columbia County;
Traffic Control Center
- 2 Best Friend Express; Georgia Bike Sense
- 3 Transitions; Frequently Called Numbers; ARTS CMS
report; Open Burning Ban
- 4 ARTS Quarterly Meeting Schedule ; ARTS Staff;
Quarterly Meetings

ARTS MEETINGS

ARTS committee meetings are usually held on the 8th Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call the ARCPC (706) 821-1796 to verify time and place.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission website includes all ARTS committee agendas and related transportation planning information. The address is:
http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/

BEST FRIEND EXPRESS SERVICE EXTENDED TO AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

May 2, 2005 marked the beginning of an expansion of the Best Friend Express into the Augusta Georgia area. Thanks to a strong cooperative effort between the Augusta Public Transit System and the Best Friend Express, riders can now travel across the Savannah River in either direction to access shopping, medical services, and recreational activities available in either state.

Prior to this partnership, many riders were forced to walk across the 13th Street Bridge to gain access to the systems. This partnership allows riders from Aiken County to travel to the Augusta transfer station on Broad Street where they can wait for connecting Augusta Public Transit System vehicles in a heated and cooled facility out of the weather and with restrooms and snack machines. Additionally, riders from Augusta Georgia can board the Best Friend Express vehicles at the Augusta transfer station and travel to North Augusta and Aiken destinations via the Best Friend Express.

This change is one of many enhancements that will be forthcoming with the Best Friend Express. Additional route changes are currently being considered for the RiverBluff / Centre South and the Nicholson Village portion of Aiken and will be announced in the very near future.

Through the cooperation of the Augusta Public Transit System and its management, as well as the cooperation of local elected officials in Aiken and North Augusta, this service enhancement is possible.

Georgia Bike Sense: A Guide for Cyclists and Motorists

Georgia Bike Sense: A Guide for Cyclists and Motorists is hot off the presses. The 64-page, booklet starts off "This manual is intended to serve as a guide to help both motorists and cyclists safely share the road, and to help adult cyclists, and young cyclists and their parents, better understand how to ride safely and legally on trails, streets, and highways in Georgia." It gets better from there with great text, photos, graphics, and layout.

The publication was funded by a Transportation Enhancement program award and it was developed by the University of Georgia's graphics division with input from GDOT staff, the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and many volunteers. The publication can be downloaded as a PDF in whole or part -- go to GDOT's main page, www.dot.state.ga.us, and click on the Georgia Bike Sense link provided under "News and Events". Hard copies of the Guide can also be ordered via the webpage.

Many thanks go out to GDOT for funding the project; to Amy Goodwin, GDOT's State Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator, for picking up and carrying the project through to completion; and to Mark Dobson, at UGA, for producing such a fine final product.

Frequently Called Numbers

- GDOT Area Office – Augusta (706) 855-3466
- GDOT District Two Office – Tennille (478) 552-4601
- SC DOT - Aiken County Maintenance Shop (803) 642-7600
- Augusta Public Works and Engineering Dept. (706) 796-5040
- Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841
- Columbia County Road Construction Dept. (706) 541-4011
- Columbia County Roads and Bridges Dept. (706) 541-1143
- Augusta Public Transit (706) 821-1721
- Aiken County Transit (Best Friend Express) (803) 648-6493



Transitions

- The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission welcomes Mrs. Cristhine Kraft as the new Planner I / GIS Specialist. Cristhine is a resident of Grovetown, Georgia, where she most recently completed a 2 year internship with SRS. Cristhine replaces Kevin Powell who is now a sport scout for Nike.
- Columbia County Planning and Development welcomes Mr. Justin Snyder as the new Planner Technician. Justin comes to Augusta from Pella, Iowa where he received his B.A. in Environmental Studies and later he received his Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning / GIS from Eastern Michigan University.

ARTS CMS REPORT

During the month of April ARTS began its yearly Congestion Management System (CMS) Report.

The CMS study, aids the ARTS to determine areas of congestion within the ARTS study area boundaries. The CMS requires that all reasonable alternatives be identified and evaluated for their ability to alleviate congestion and enhance mobility within the ARTS boundaries.

The 2005 CMS will be completed and distributed in mid- to- late July 2005.

Seasonal Open Burning Ban In Effect

Effective May 1, 2005, an open burning ban took effect in Richmond and Columbia Counties and remains in effect through September 30, 2005. This annual ban is part of an early action compact designed to prevent the Augusta area from becoming an ozone non-attainment area. The open burning ban is designed to limit open burning during the hottest, sunniest time of the year when weather conditions can intensify air quality problems.

The only exemptions to this law include the following activities:

- Agricultural processes necessary for the production of crops
- Prescribed burning of forestland by the owner or designee to establish favorable seedbeds, remove completing underbrush, accelerate nutrient cycling, control tree pests, and contribute to ecological benefits. These burns cannot be used to clear property designated for construction activities.
- Slash burning of forestlands by the owner or designee following tree harvesting. Slash burning must be followed by re-seeding of the area.
- Small fires for recreational purposes or cooking food
- Fires set for fire-fighting training
- Operation of open flame devices, including tar kettles, blow torches, welding torches, portable heaters, and other flame-making equipment
- Disposal of packing material previously containing explosives

For more information, or to report a violation, contact the Georgia Environmental Protection Division district office in Augusta at 792-7744.

Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission
525 Telfair Street
Augusta, GA 30901

PRSRT. STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #642
AUGUSTA, GA

Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State 98765-4321

JULY 2005
NO MEETINGS
AUGUST 2005
CAC/TCC – AUG 10 TH 10:00 A.M. S.C. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE NO MEETING
SEPTEMBER 2005
POLICY – SEPTEMBER 1 ST , 11:00 A.M. CAC/TCC – SEPTEMBER 14 TH , 10:00 A.M.

The ARTS Staff

Project Director:

George A. Patty, ARCPC
Executive Director
(706) 821-1796
gpatty@augustaga.gov

ARTS Coordinator:

Lynn Russell, ARCPC
(706) 821-1796
lrussell@augustaga.gov

Transit Planner:

Juriah Lewis, ARCPC
(706) 821-1796
jlewis@augustaga.gov

Planning Director:

Paul DeCamp, ARCPC
Planning Director
(706) 821-1796
pdecamp@augustaga.gov

Transportation Planner:

Calvin Abram, ARCPC
(706) 821-1796
cabram@augustaga.gov

Aiken County Transportation Planner:

Stephen Strohming, ACPDD
(803) 642 – 1520
sstrohming@aikencounty.net